

# High Bentham Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121380
<b>Local Authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	359001
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brenda Clarke

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–10
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	124
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Robert Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Catherine Boocock
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2007
<b>School address</b>	Main Street High Bentham, Lancaster Lancashire LA2 7JU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons and observed all five teachers. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, an adviser from the local authority and two groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of evidence, including information on pupils' progress, safeguarding, the school improvement plan, pupils' work books from the previous academic year and pupils' individual education plans. The inspection team looked in detail at 48 completed questionnaires from parents and carers as well as questionnaires completed by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how well different groups of pupils achieve, particularly in mathematics and writing
- the consistency of the quality of teaching and learning across the school
- the reason for the decline in attainment since the last inspection
- the impact of the curriculum on pupils' learning and enjoyment
- the extent of pupils' personal development and the quality of the care, guidance and support they receive to ensure their safety and well-being.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average primary school. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. The school manages a before- and after-school club. The school has achieved the Activemark, International School Award, Healthy Schools Award and Inclusion Mark. Since the last inspection the school has reduced from five to four classes, resulting in larger class sizes. Pupils transfer to middle schools at the end of Year 5.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to driving up pupils' attainment and achievement as well as their attendance.

Achievement is inadequate overall. Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make good progress because of the good provision. As a result, pupils' attainment at the start of Year 1 is average or above average. However, in recent years pupils have left Year 2 with attainment significantly below that expected for their age. There has been some improvement recently, as seen in end of Year 2 assessments for 2010, especially in mathematics, but attainment is not high enough when compared to pupils' starting points in Year 1. Pupils' progress is inconsistent and inadequate overall as they move through Key Stage 2, and too few pupils attain age-related expectations in writing and mathematics by the end of Year 5. Pupils' attendance has declined and is now lower than the national average. For these reasons the school provides inadequate value for money. Well focused individual education plans support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities effectively so that they make better progress than their peers.

Teachers' marking of pupils' written work does not consistently inform pupils of how they might improve, limiting the progress they make.

The school takes good care of its pupils. Parents and carers appreciate the 'very friendly atmosphere' and 'commitment of staff' so that pupils feel extremely safe and enjoy their education. Pupils are confident and happy and this underpins their good behaviour. Pupils have an outstanding understanding of healthy lifestyles as evidenced in the Activemark and Healthy School awards. They enjoy the good range of clubs and opportunities to take part in competitive sport. Pupils have a voice in decisions through their school council and seek to make a difference as members of the Fair Trade group.

Teaching is inadequate overall, although it varies in quality across the school. Strong relationships and good behaviour management ensure that lessons are orderly. Where teaching was inadequate during the inspection, pupils spent too long sitting passively and teachers failed to focus on pupils' age and stage of learning. A brisk pace was missing. The curriculum is satisfactory and has some positive features. Provision is enriched by visits to interesting places, such as a Buddhist temple. The school is at the heart of the community. This enables pupils to take part in local decisions and to experience many exciting aspects of village life.

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Leaders know the school well and are aware of its strengths and weaknesses. As a result, staff and the governing body are committed to improving provision and have started successfully to take steps to do so. Accurate evaluation of pupils' attainment is enabling staff to highlight where pupils are making insufficient progress. Recently initiated strategies are in place to halt the decline. The impact can already be seen in the increased number of pupils in Year 2 attaining the higher Level 3 at the end of the 2010 academic year in reading, mathematics and science. This demonstrates the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further. The school's development plan is too wide-ranging and insufficiently focused on raising attainment. Senior staff monitor the quality of teaching in classrooms regularly, but do not evaluate learning and progress in lessons as rigorously as they could.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- By July 2011, raise attainment and accelerate pupils' progress in writing and mathematics, by:
  - ensuring that work is closely matched to pupils' needs in whole-class lessons, group and individual work
  - ensuring that pupils have opportunities to solve mathematical problems in interesting and creative ways
  - developing pupils' ability to write more extensively and for a variety of purposes
  - sharpening improvement planning to focus more closely on raising attainment.
- Improve the quality of teaching across the school and in all subjects so that it is consistently good, by ensuring that:
  - the pace of lessons is always appropriately brisk so that pupils made good or better progress
  - lessons include sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils
  - marking and target setting consistently inform pupils of their next small steps in learning
  - the impact of these changes on the quality of pupils' learning and progress is closely monitored and any actions for further improvement are taken.
- By July 2011 improve pupils' attendance to at least the national average by reviewing the effectiveness of current initiatives and improving or extending them where appropriate.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**4**

Pupils say they enjoy school. They are enthusiastic learners. They listen carefully to their teachers and others and behave well. In most lessons observed, pupils worked at a satisfactory rather than a quick pace and could have achieved more. This is because deadlines were not challenging and they were not prompted to work hard. Achievement is inadequate overall. Pupils do not make enough progress in Year 1 in reading and writing and less than half reach the expected levels for their age. This inadequate progress continues, so that by the end of Year 2, the attainment of almost half of the pupils is well

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below national expectations in writing and below expectations in mathematics. An increased emphasis on learning about sounds and letters from Reception upwards is helping to boost pupils' reading skills. The impact of strategies to improve attainment is now evident in Year 2.

There is a similar picture of underachievement in Key Stage 2, although progress accelerates in Year 5 due to challenging teaching. At the end of Year 5 in 2010, most pupils attained the levels expected in reading and were close to what is expected in writing and science. However, only half of the pupils reached the expected level in mathematics. Limited progress in mathematics is evident throughout the school. Pupils have too few opportunities to solve mathematical problems and so experience difficulty when solving multi-part problems. Younger children lack confidence to write independently while older pupils sometimes have difficulty in writing more complex, interesting sentences. Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily from their varying starting points.

Pupils develop confidence in speaking and most express themselves clearly and succinctly. Pupils get on with each other extremely well and display care and respect for others. Their development of their workplace skills is inadequate because of pupils' below-average basic skills in mathematics and writing. Low attendance also has a negative impact on pupils' learning. In lessons pupils participate and cooperate well. They develop a strong sense of right and wrong. They contribute well to the school, local and wider community, showing empathy for others less fortunate than themselves, as when fundraising for the Haiti disaster.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	4
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

A key reason for pupils' underachievement is the inconsistency in teaching. While some strong teaching is evident in the school, overall, teaching does not have the consistent impact required to build effectively upon the good start children receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although some teaching is good or better, scrutiny of pupils' books indicates that teachers frequently plan work that is insufficiently matched to pupils' differing learning needs. This is particularly so in mathematics. Another key reason is that pupils frequently spend too long listening to the teacher, resulting in limited time to complete their tasks. This, together with a lack of challenging deadlines to complete work, goes some way to explaining why learning slows. Although teachers have detailed assessment information about the specific needs of pupils and groups, it is not consistently put to good use in lessons. In the better lessons, teachers are lively and encouraging. No time is wasted and pupils undertake a wealth of challenging activities at exactly the right level. Teaching assistants give good quality support. They are well respected by pupils, but their skills are sometimes underused, particularly in the introductory parts of lessons. The marking of pupils' work does not routinely inform them of what to do to improve. Pupils are given academic targets for improvement but these are not always used in lessons, limiting their impact on pupils' learning.

The curriculum has some positive features. A particular strength is in the tailoring of provision to help potentially vulnerable pupils, for example, finding additional funding so

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that all pupils have access to the broad range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils' skills in literacy are extended satisfactorily through other subjects, although opportunities to develop skills in numeracy and information and communication technology are not exploited to the full. The curriculum is adapted appropriately for the mixed-age classes. A wide range of creative experiences, such as the whole school's involvement in the musical 'Wizard of Oz,' enhances provision.

Pastoral care is a strength of the school. Pupils say there are no bullying or incidents racist behaviour. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the well organised breakfast and after-school clubs. Transition arrangements are good, supporting children well when they start and leave the school. Effective working with other professionals makes sure pupils with specific needs are given good support. Attendance officers effectively chase up persistent absentees and the number has successfully been reduced, but other initiatives are not arresting the overall decline in attendance.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>3</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has successfully built a united team that is determined to improve provision. The systems for assessment and tracking have been improved and are providing a clearer picture of the progress made by different groups of pupils. Staff are beginning to be held accountable for pupils' progress and are now rigorously tracking progress at frequent intervals. Recent training in the assessment of writing is already paying dividends, as teachers use this information accurately to pinpoint pupils' next steps in learning. There is clear evidence of improvement, especially by the end of Year 2. Safeguarding, including safe recruitment and child protection, is given a high priority and all statutory safeguarding duties are rigorously met. Links with parents and carers and other partnerships are satisfactory overall. Partnerships with outside agencies bring benefits to pupils' education, for example, participation in competitive sport through a schools' sports initiative. Good systems enable parents and carers to support their children's learning at home, but they are not routinely informed about their children's achievements. The promotion of equal opportunities is inadequate. The school does have insight into the performance of different groups of pupils, but is at an early stage of using this to tackle the differences in pupils' progress in different classes and subjects. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good, so that pupils develop a good understanding of the wider local and international communities.

The school has readily accepted the recently introduced programme of intensive support provided by the local authority. The governing body has a sound strategic view of the



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school's strengths and weaknesses. Individual governors willingly use their skills to support the school. There is an acknowledgment of the need to provide greater challenge and with recent involvement of a local authority adviser the governing body is now better placed to do so.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery with broadly average skills except in the key areas of early writing and numeracy. Their progress is good as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage so that by the end of the reception year all are working at or beyond the expectations for their age. The inspection took place during children's first week in their new Nursery and Reception classes. They have settled remarkably well due to the effective transition arrangements. Behaviour management by staff is outstanding and children already behave exceptionally well. The carefully planned, enriching activities make learning fun and fully engage children. However, opportunities are sometimes missed to reinforce learning in a variety of ways, especially outdoors and in independent classroom activities. Staff are outstanding role models and give great importance to listening carefully, caring and sharing.

Links with parents and carers are good. The use of 'WOW' books provides valuable opportunities for dialogue between home and school. Leadership is good. Assessment and tracking systems are comprehensive and used effectively to promote learning for each child. The staff take great care of children and ensure their health and safety.

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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Around a third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Many of those who responded wrote at length to explain their views. Most agree that their children enjoy school. Almost all have positive views and are happy with their children's education. Quotes that reflect these views include, 'The school has a very friendly atmosphere', 'Staff are very approachable and listen to any concerns', and, 'My son is happy to be at this school'. A few parents and carers said they were given insufficient information about their child's progress. The inspection team found that parents and carers do not consistently receive detailed information to enable them have an informed view about the rate of progress their children are making.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at High Bentham Community Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 48 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 124 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	77	10	21	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	32	67	16	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	30	63	11	23	4	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	52	19	40	1	2	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	33	69	13	27	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	56	17	35	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	63	16	33	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	27	56	14	29	0	0	2	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	52	19	40	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	40	24	50	1	2	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	46	23	48	0	0	2	4
The school is led and managed effectively	23	48	21	44	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	34	71	11	23	3	6	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of High Bentham Community Primary School, Lancaster, LA2 7JU**

Thank you for your warm and friendly welcome and for answering all our questions when we inspected your school recently. You spoke so clearly and confidently in lessons and in the interesting meetings we held with you. The vast majority of you really enjoy school.

We found that some things about your school are good. Yours is a happy and safe school. Staff take good care of you and you have an outstanding understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. You behave well and show great care and concern for others. Those of you in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress.

However, you do not make enough progress overall from Years 1 to 5 and your attendance is not as good as it should be. So we have given your school a 'notice to improve'. This means that inspectors will visit again to check on your progress and to make sure that the school is making improvements quickly.

We have asked your school to make three important improvements:

- make sure that you all make at least satisfactory progress, especially in writing and mathematics
- make sure that teachers always set work that is just right for you and challenges you to learn at a faster pace
- improve attendance so that all pupils attend as much as they can.

You can all help by working hard and always attending school unless you are ill. Thank you once again for your help and best wishes in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Brenda Clarke  
Lead Inspector

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